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TURKMENISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

A Maternity Ward Gains Tranquility

USAID helps transform maternity hospital, improve health



Doctor Maya Rejepova (center) with her colleagues at the Dashoguz Maternal and Child Health Care Center. Photo: USAID

USAID's ZdravPlus program has helped a maternity hospital adopt a number of international health care practices, which has improved the quality of care and reduced complications during birth and maternal mortality.

"Thanks to the changes we have implemented with USAID support, both mothers and children are happier and healthier," says doctor Maya Rejepova, one of the participants of a USAID program that works to improve maternal and child health in Turkmenistan.

Dashoguz Maternal and Child Health Care Center where Rejepova works has collaborated with USAID programs since 2008. The center operates as a central maternity hospital for the province; its staff, including 10 gynecologists, 6 neonatologists, 19 midwives, and 14 nurses, attend to over 5,500 births annually.

To enhance health care at this facility, USAID through its ZdravPlus program has helped the center to promote exclusive breastfeeding, expand patient education, and enhance the general quality of the services. Since 2007, USAID has also been supporting the implementation of the Turkmen National Safe Motherhood Program at the center. As part of this effort, USAID has trained about 14% of the staff to lead pregnancies and births in accordance to the World Health Organization's standards.

"Thanks to USAID's support, the hospital has had fewer complications during births, maternal mortality has declined, and hospital infection rates have dropped as well," says hospital's director Bayram Berdiyevitch. "USAID-trained staff help expectant mothers choose proper nutrition and prepare for birth, which has significantly reduced the cases of dehydration during labor – one of the significant causes of maternal mortality," he says.

With USAID support, the maternity ward has also reduced the use of unnecessary medication, allows family members to help mothers during the labor, and has been offering mothers more comfortable positions during the labor. New-born babies are no longer separated from their mothers and sleep with them in the same individual room. "The corridors used to ring from children's cries, and we would be running from one room to another all day long," remembers doctor Rejepova. "Now it's so peaceful and quiet, and we have can spend more time attending to each individual case," she says with a big smile on her face.